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THE ABORIGINES OF MINNESOTA.

PUBLISHED BY THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
ST. PAUL, MINN., 1911.

Reviewed by Dr. J. F. Snyder.

Among the many advantages enjoyed by the State of Minnesota, the one for which it may be specially congratulated is that of having had—and still having—citizens of education and enterprise devoted to the study of its local anthropology, men broad and sensible enough to comprehend the value of that study as the basis of the state's history; and for public sentiment so enlightened and liberal as to appreciate and encourage their labors, and supply the means for perpetuating the results they obtained, partly in form of the above entitled volume. Particularly to the genius and persistent efforts of four brainy men is science and the public indebted for this magnificent work. It comprises full reports of the state wide surveys and examinations of prehistoric Indian antiquities by Alfred J. Hill, and those of his assistant, Theodore H. Lewis, together with records of the many years of observation and research in the same field by Jacob V. Brower; all "collated, augmented and described" by the eminent geologist and naturalist, Prof. N. H. Winchell.

Mr. Hill, a native of England, coming to Minnesota Territory in 1854, secured employment in the government's office of military roads at St. Paul, and, after admission of the state into the Union, was for many years engaged in the survey department of its land office. While in that position, in intervals of his official duties, and at his own expense, he perfected a complete and accurate map of the state. This led him into the study of early American history, and that of the upper Missis-

sippi region particularly. He served as a volunteer soldier in the Indian war of 1862, and transferred to the office of topographical engineers at Washington, was on duty there until the civil war closed. On his return to Minnesota he joined its Historical Society, was chosen secretary of the committee on archaeology, and soon was recognized as one of the most industrious and competent members, not only of that committee, but of the society. Inspired by his zeal and enthusiasm, the committee of which he was secretary began the systematic survey of all the mounds and other Indian remains in the State.

Some progress was made in this undertaking when, for some cause, the committee was discontinued, but Mr. Hill did not abandon the great scheme he had projected, and for sixteen years he prosecuted it at his own expense; his outlay in that time amounting to \$16,200. In 1880 he became acquainted with Mr. Lewis, who was engaged in similar research, and together they established "The Northwestern Archaeological Survey," an enterprise conducted by them, altogether at Mr. Hill's expense, until his death in June, 1895. Mr. Hill was singularly modest and devoid of ambition for fame in literature or science. With the exception of two or three historical monographs—of marked ability—he wrote nothing for publication, though he no doubt had in view the ulterior design of giving to the public, in print, the fruits of his work when completed, but his death defeated the realization of that intention.

Mr. Lewis was a prolific writer of archaeological sketches, generally well illustrated and published in various scientific periodicals, apparently with Mr. Hill's approval; but never mentioning Mr. Hill's name or intimating in any manner that the contributions to science were elaborated at his cost, or that he was even remotely entitled to any credit for their production. By the terms of their contract, it seems, Mr. Hill retained all plats,

maps, field notes and other data of their surveys and explorations, and all implements, relics and curios recovered belonged to Mr. Lewis, who sold them upon leaving the state in 1905, to Rev. E. C. Mitchell, of St. Paul. And that gentleman very generously presented them, as part of a larger donation, to the Minnesota State Historical Society. The Minnesota legislature, in its appropriations for the State Historical Society, after the death of Mr. Hill, included an amount sufficient to purchase all his accumulated archaeological and historical material, and for publishing the same.

Jacob V. Brower went from Michigan to Minnesota when quite young. There, in 1862, when 19 years of age, he volunteered under Gen. Sibley to fight the Indians, and by subsequent enlistments served in the Union army until the civil war closed in 1865. Returning then to Minnesota he was elected auditor of Todd county, studied law, was admitted to the bar, married and again served the people with high credit as a member of the legislature, and in several other responsible public stations. He was known to science chiefly by his researches respecting the route of Coronado's expedition in 1541, his exploration of the ultimate sources of the Missouri river, and his survey of Lake Itasca and the headwaters of the Mississippi. He was an able man and profound scholar, a fluent and impressive speaker, and voluminous writer. He co-operated with Mr. Hill in his field work from 1886 to 1892; was a very active, influential and valuable member of the Minnesota Historical Society, contributing largely to its historical collections, and also to its literature of the state's archaeology and natural history. He died in June, 1905, leaving his unpublished data and vast collections of prehistoric and historic remains of Indian life, in the custody of the Historical Society of his state.

But a short time after Congress had established the territorial government of Minnesota, in 1849, the Minnesota State Historical Society was organized, and has ever since been well maintained in faithful obedience to its

primary purpose. When the territory was admitted into the Union in 1858, the new state, recognizing the importance of the society, instead of attaching it as an appendage to a library (as in Illinois), placed it in full control of all its historical interests.

One of its charter provisions was a committee on archaeology, charged with the collection of all accessible information relative to the past and present aborigines of the territory, and acquisition and preservation of relics of the arts and other remains illustrative of the Indians' domestic habits and life history. So well has that duty been executed the society has published, apart from its annual reports, 13 volumes of "Historical Collections" of inestimable value, and its museum and library have grown to immense proportions requiring additional buildings for their adequate care and display. In this latest of its publications—the Aborigines of Minnesota—Prof. Winchell combined with the elaborate reports of Mr. Hill's field work and the products of years of investigation and study by Mr. Brower and Mr. Lewis, a mass of information from various other sources, and much gained by himself in the course of his long service as State Geologist, forming altogether a priceless contribution to science.

It is a large royal quarto volume, well printed and well bound, of 761 pages, having 642 illustrations in the text, 36 full page half tone plates of noted objects and Indian portraits, several maps, each covering a page, and the Hill diagrams of mounds, many of which are folded, being too large for single pages. They show quite a number of effigy mounds of the type peculiar to southern Wisconsin. The frontispiece is the portrait of a typical historic Indian wearing a blanket and necklace of bears' claws. In the introduction are portraits of Mr. Hill, Mr. Lewis and Mr. Brower, but (unjustifiable) modesty excluded that of Prof. Winchell.

The initial chapter of the work exhaustively, and fairly, reviews all facts that have been advanced in support of the belief, by some, that man existed here prior to, or during, the glacial era. Chief among those "evidences" are the much discussed chipped quartz implements and quartz chips from the gravel beds at Little Falls. However, no dogmatic insistence of their genuineness is expressed, but, on the contrary, the question is disposed of by this statement: "The fact that quartz chippings, and even perfect arrow points of white quartz, are found to be the product of manufacture by the modern Indian, at the same locality, and also more widely in the state, has introduced an element in this investigation which has caused some confusion, and all the quartz chips have been referred, by some, to the Indian of the region." Undoubtedly a correct solution. Another correct opinion handed down—by Mr. Brower for the society—is that the mounds of Minnesota were built by "the Indian of the region," or his immediate ancestors—not by a distinct unknown race as was long conjectured.

The "Records and descriptions of earthworks in Minnesota," including Mr. Hill's plats, occupy the 331 following pages. Then 81 pages are devoted to " Implements of War, the Chase, Domestic Economy and Tobacco Pipes." In succession are chapters descriptive of " Primitive Agriculture, Ornaments, and Foods," " Articles made of Copper," " Dakota Traditions, Myths, Religion, Character, Death and Burial." The two Indian tribes of recent times specially identified with Minnesota were the Dakotas and Ojibwas. To the history and characteristics, the customs, habits and arts of those savages much space in the book is given, including accounts of treaties, missions, reservations and habitations of those and other Indians. This volume, the Aborigines of Minnesota, is a grand repository of facts and information that must in future be indispensable to students of American ethnology and archaeology.

The remarkable amount of work accomplished by the State Historical Society of Minnesota in (comparatively) so brief a period is creditable proof of the intelligence, industry and enlightened views of its managers. Wisely constituted a state institution, controlled by men having proper conceptions of the legitimate province and functions of State Historical Societies, it has achieved results of which its members may justly be proud as comparing brilliantly with those of similar organizations in some of the older and wealthier states.